

Message Text

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ORIGIN EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 L-02 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 INT-05 IO-10

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DRAFTED BY EB/AN:WBCOBB:TP

APPROVED BY EB/AN:WBCOBB

EA/ANP - L. MOSER

CAB - L. BROWNE

DOI - R. MILLER (INFO)

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, WS

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS AIRWAY (SPIA)

PERMIT

REF: STATE 75822 AND 88259

1. EMBASSY ECONOMIC COUNSELOR HARTWICK INFORMS DEPT THAT IN CONVERSATIONS WITH SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT ENARI ON QUESTION OF PERMIT FOR SPIA, HE LEARNED THAT GWS HAD GREAT CONCERN THAT SPIA, AS ONE OF A NUMBER OF BUSINESS INTERESTS HELD BY GEORGE WRAY, MIGHT AFTER ISSUANCE OF PERMIT BE SOLD TO A MAJOR CARRIER. CONCEIVABLY SUCH CARRIER WOULD BE ABLE TO MOUNT A LEVEL OF SERVICE WHICH COULD DRIVE POLYNESIAN OFF OF THE APIA-PAGO PAGO ROUTE. TO PREVENT THIS FROM HAPPENING, ENARI INQUIRED WHETHER USG WOULD APPROVE OF CONDITION IN SPIA'S PERMIT WHICH WOULD PROHIBIT SALE OF

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FIRM TO A LARGE TRUNK AIRLINE. HE SAID THAT IF SOME

PROTECTION ALONG THESE LINES COULD BE SECURED, IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR GWS TO ISSUE A PERMIT TO SPIA WITHIN A FEW WEEKS. HARTWICK ADVISES THAT PRIME MINISTER, IN RECOGNITION OF NEED TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM INTERESTS, SEEMS FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARD SPIA, AND THAT ENARI IS ON HIS WAY OUT AS SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT.

2. ALTHOUGH IN VIEW OF ENARI'S IMMINENT DEPARTURE, IT IS OPEN TO QUESTION WHETHER HE WILL HAVE ANY INFLUENCE ON ULTIMATE GWS DECISION, USG BELIEVES IT MAY BE HELPFUL FOR EMBASSY NOW TO ADVISE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE THAT USG WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION SHOULD GWS WISH TO INCORPORATE SUITABLE PROTECTIVE PROVISIONS RE OWNERSHIP IN SPIA'S OPERATING PERMIT. FYI. SO FAR AS WE KNOW, THERE IS NO REPEAT NO INTEREST ON THE PART OF A US CARRIER IN BUYING OUT SPIA'S PRESENT OWNERSHIP. END FYI. THIS COULD BE DONE BY STATING THAT PERMIT VALID ONLY SO LONG AS THERE IS NO CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP OR THAT ANY PROPOSED CHANGES OF OWNERSHIP RECEIVE APPROVAL OF GWS AUTHORITIES. PLEASE ADVISE WHEN COMMUNICATION SENT. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CIVIL AVIATION, SALES, AIR ROUTES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MartinML
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE108736
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: WBCOBB:TP
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750164-0380
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750565/aaaacgxr.tel
Line Count: 81
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 75822, 75 AND 88259
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MartinML
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 JUL 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <19 NOV 2003 by MartinML>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CIVAIR: SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS AIRWAY (SPIA) PERMIT
TAGS: EAIR, WS, SPIA
To: WELLINGTON
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006